



Course Name: English Phonology
Instructor: Firas F. Ali

Chapter 8: The Syllable – Part I

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- The Syllable: Definition
- The Minimum Syllable
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- The Structure of the Syllable

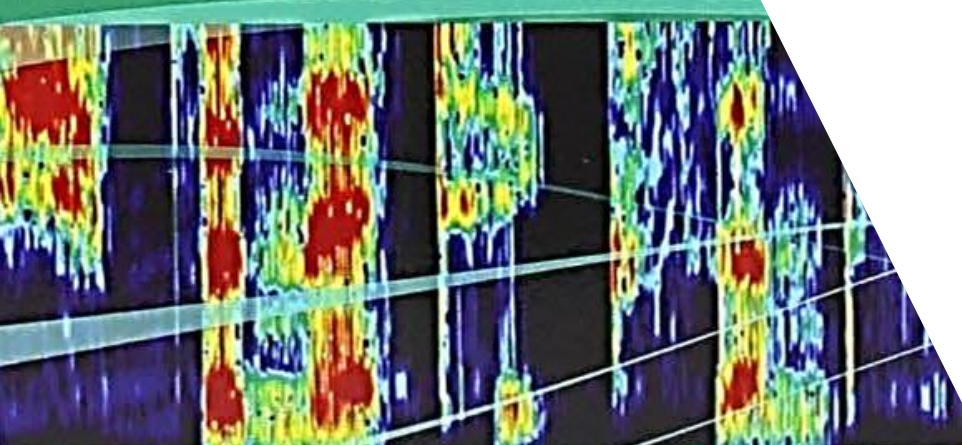
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The syllable is a unit of phonological organization whose central component is the nucleus which is usually a vowel and maybe preceded or followed by consonants.

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- Words with one syllable are called monosyllabic words.
- Words with two syllables are called disyllabic words or polysyllabic words.
- Words with two or more syllables are called polysyllabic words.

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Examples

Monosyllabic Words

Few, red, sun, act, one, bus, cat, eye, zoo, raid, book, head, soul, week, base, cord, step, dumb, life, fear, head, door, heat, high, moon, path, rage, drop, sword, steel, sweep, tongue, cause, worse, crown, blame, break, faith, snake, month, knees, bombs, sleep, speak, wrong, mourn, school, cheeks, etc.

Disyllabic Words

Avoid, enter, polar, noble, viper, bible, party, women, cobra, every, tiger, value, moral, defeat, wisdom, detect, insist, senses, effect, island, debate, silent, London, forget, public, narrow, bitter, weapon, spirit, result, fortune, against, teenage, patient, objects, sunrise, current, support, acquire, believe, outside, etc.

Polysyllabic Words

Interval, luxury, magical, remedy, legacy, heroic, energy, Africa, visitor, popular, element, another, imagine, creator, capital, excited, phonology, usually, economy, locality, military, security, morality, futility, equality, atrocity, national, beautiful, consonant, situation, automatic, develop, attitude, etc.



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The minimum syllable is the smallest syllable and has two types: a single vowel in isolation such as ‘eye’ /aɪ/ and or /ɔ:/, and an isolated sound such as /m/ to indicate agreement or /ʃ/ to ask for silence.

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1

Some syllables have an **onset**, i.e., one or more consonants preceding the nucleus or center or peak of the syllable.

Example: key /ki:/

2

Some syllables have no onset but have a **coda**, i.e., one or more consonants following the nucleus of the syllable.

Example: arms /ɑ:mz/

3

Some syllables have both onset and coda.

Example: fill /fɪl/

4

Some syllables have no onset and no coda.

Example: eye /aɪ/

Phonotactics is the study of the possible phoneme combinations of a language, or the study of the structure of syllables in a language.

When we have two or more consonants together without an intervening vowel, we call them a **consonant cluster**.